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ITEM 6 (a):* COORDINATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

JOINT PROGRESS REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME AND THE UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT)

Summary

The present report was prepared jointly by the Executive Directors of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 40/199 of 17 December 1985, on cooperation between UNEP and the Centre, and as requested in UNEP Governing Council decision 14/3 of 18 June 1987 and Commission resolution 10/3 of 16 April 1987 on the same subject. The report highlights the cooperation between UNEP and the Centre in the four previously established subject areas (section I), and within the system-wide efforts of the United Nations (section II), and then outlines the future prospects for cooperation (section III).

* Refers to the number of the item on the Provisional Agenda (UNEP/GC.17/1).

Introduction

1. In its resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977 concerning institutional arrangements for international cooperation in the field of human settlements, the General Assembly urged that the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Commission on Human Settlements should meet biannually with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the bureau of its Governing Council "to review together their respective priorities and programmes for improving human settlements and to strengthen and extend co-operation between the two organizations". In its resolution 35/77 B of 5 December 1980, the General Assembly decided that the joint bureaux meetings should be held once a year rather than on a biannual basis. On 17 December 1985 the General Assembly adopted resolution 40/199, in which it decided to discontinue the joint meetings of the bureaux altogether.

2. The decision of the General Assembly to discontinue the joint meetings was taken on the joint recommendation of the Governing Council of UNEP and the Commission on Human Settlements. The recommendation was based on UNEP Governing Council decision 13/12 of 23 May 1985 and Commission resolution 8/14 of 8 May 1985, in which both the governing bodies furthermore:

(a) Expressed satisfaction at the continuing cooperation between the secretariats of UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) and urged intensification of that cooperation;

(b) Decided to include in the agenda of their future sessions an item on cooperation between UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) and to discuss the item on the basis of a common progress report of the two Executive Directors.

3. The present report on cooperation between UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) has been prepared jointly by the secretariats of the two organizations pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/199 and as requested by Commission resolution 8/14 and UNEP Governing Council decision 13/12.

I. COOPERATION UNDER THE SUBJECT AREAS

4. This section contains information on the joint activities of UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) under the four subject areas established by the joint bureaux meeting at its seventh session.

Subject area 1: Assessment of environmental conditions in human settlements

5. With support from the Government of Sweden and in the framework of the UNCHS (Habitat)/UNDP/World Bank Urban Management Programme (UMP), UNEP collaborated with the Centre on the development of remote sensing and geographic information system (GIS) techniques for application to urban environmental management. The joint activities resulted in a UMP publication, "Urban application of satellite remote sensing and GIS analysis", and prototypical applications in two Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP) demonstration projects, one at Dar es Salaam and the other at Ismailia.

6. To enhance the operational relevance of the UNEP/WHO GEMS-Air Programme further, it has been agreed to use SCP as a vehicle for applying the air-quality monitoring technology developed by GEMS-Air over the past 15 years to urban management decision-making.

Subject area 2: Environmental aspects of policies, planning and management of human settlements - both rural and urban

7. Coastal area planning and management. In response to growing concern about the environmental degradation of coastal areas, and recognizing that the activities and initiatives of UNEP (OCA/PAC, and GRID) and UNCHS (Habitat) in this field are in many ways complementary and mutually supportive, the two organizations, in August 1992, approved the Framework for Cooperation between UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) on Integrated Planning and Management of Coastal Areas. To avoid any duplication of efforts in this field and increase collaboration between UNEP (OCA/PAC and GRID) and UNCHS (Habitat), a cooperation consultation process was thereby established.

8. Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP). UNCHS (Habitat) launched SCP in August 1990 as a follow-up to the UNEP/UNCHS Environmental Guidelines for Settlements Planning and Management, which provide a conceptual basis for the SCP activities, and in response to Commission resolution 12/18 of 2 May 1989 on sustainable settlements development and to resolution 12/20 of 2 May 1989 on increased cooperation with UNEP. The aim of SCP is to provide municipal authorities and their partners in the public, private, and community sectors with an improved environmental planning and management capacity. SCP demonstration projects result in broad-based environmental strategies, priority capital-investment projects, and strengthened urban management capacities. Financial support required, at some $0.5-1.0 million per city, comes from UNDP at the country level, and from bilateral and multilateral sources.

9. As a result of high government demand and strong donor interest, SCP gained significant momentum during 1991-1992. City demonstrations at various stages in the project cycle are under way in 12 countries. During the biennium, SCP has become a vehicle for inter-organizational cooperation. As a follow-up to the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), SCP will be used as one of the programmes for implementing Agenda 21, related to urban environment.

Subject area 3: Environmentally sound and appropriate human settlements technology

10. During the period under review, UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) have continued to make progress on the project entitled "Refuse Derived Methane" (RDM), a project which examines the greenhouse effect of land-fill gas. An extensive survey of literature has now been completed and in the next phase of the work, an attempt will be made to develop modelling techniques to simulate methane production from anthropogenic sources such as land-filled solid waste, mining activities, automobile exhausts and industrial processes.

11. UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) are currently reviewing the possibilities of developing a municipal solid-waste-management database. This follows from their extensive collaboration in the formulation of the chapter on solid wastes and sewage-related issues which formed part of the documentation of Agenda 21. When established, the database will provide the basis for

monitoring and reporting on the status of municipal solid-waste management in different cities. It is also expected to serve as a management tool for local authorities charged with the collection, transport and disposal of municipal waste in an environmentally-sound and appropriate manner.

12. In May 1991, UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) actively participated in the Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts on Land-based Sources of Marine Pollution, at Halifax, Canada, that had been organized by the Canadian Government in association with the UNCED Secretariat. UNCHS (Habitat) also took part in the Meeting of Government-designated Experts to Formulate a Draft Strategy for the Reduction of the Degradation of the Marine Environment from Land-based Sources of Pollution and Activities in Coastal Areas held by UNEP at Nairobi in December 1991, as a follow-up to the Halifax meeting in accordance with UNEP Governing Council decision 16/26A of 31 May 1991.

13. Both organizations contributed to the preparation and success of the International Conference on Water and Environment that took place at Dublin in January 1992. The purpose of the Conference was to put water supply as a major issue on the international agenda and, for the first time, to outline a world water policy. On that occasion, the Executive Directors of UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) stressed the importance of more sensible water-conservation strategies to face the growing demand over the limited water supplies.

14. In October 1992, UNCHS (Habitat) participated in the International Symposium on Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technology, organized by UNEP and the Government of Japan, and held in the cities of Osaka and Otsu to commemorate the establishment of the UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre, as a follow-up to the implementation of Agenda 21. At the Symposium, the successful transfer of environmentally-sound technologies was identified by UNEP as essential for avoiding environmental degradation as well as economic dislocation and conflict over limited resources. UNCHS (Habitat) will assist the Centre in developing programmes of technology transfer in the fields of its own competence, especially urban management and development of settlement infrastructures.

Subject area 4: Research, training and the dissemination of information on environmentally sound human settlements planning and management

15. A training course was organized by the International Academy of Architecture (IAA), with support from UNEP, at the Santo Kiriko Centre, Assenovgrad, Bulgaria, during September 1991. The main purpose of the training was to apply the three-volume Environmental Guidelines for Settlements Planning and Management, which was jointly developed by UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) in 1985. The other objective of the training was to enhance professional knowledge of town planners and urban managers in the area of environment. Twenty-six participants (lecturers and trainees) from 10 different countries attended the forum. Trainees came from Bulgaria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Maldives, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and Sri Lanka.

16. UNCHS (Habitat) contributed a lecture entitled "Human settlements and sustainable development" to the training course. In all, 16 lectures were delivered covering different topics on environment and human settlements. Country representatives also presented reports on environment and settlements in their respective countries. UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) intend to organize similar courses in the next biennium.

17. During the period under review, several documents on environmental aspects of human settlements were produced and disseminated by UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat). Some of them are listed in the annex.

II. COOPERATION IN SYSTEM-WIDE EFFORTS

18. This section contains information on cooperation between UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) in a number of United Nations system-wide efforts directly relevant to the work and activities of both organizations. This information is given for reference purposes only. Details on the actual state and implications in any of these system-wide efforts for future cooperation between UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) are given and/or incorporated elsewhere in the documentation for the Governing Council of UNEP and the Commission on Human Settlements.

19. Meetings of the Designated Officials on Environmental Matters (DOEM). A representative of UNCHS (Habitat) has participated in the regular meetings of DOEM and has contributed to the discussions on the system-wide preparations for, and the preparations, of the 1994-1995 programme budget document of UNEP.

20. The Panel of Experts on Environmental Management for Vector Control (PEEM). PEEM was established jointly by the World Health Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations and UNEP in 1981. In 1991, UNCHS (Habitat) joined those three agencies as a member. As a result of this, the mandate of PEEM was revised to reflect concern with environmental health hazards in urban areas. This expanded mandate now covers the development of natural resources, agriculture and human settlements, urban water management and health promotion, and the use of environmental management techniques for the control of disease vectors and the protection of human health and the environment. UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) participated in the meetings of PEEM held in 1992 at Rome and Harare, where a number of project proposals were discussed for implementation.

21. Both UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) contributed extensively to the formulation of the documentation in the preparatory process of UNCED. They participated actively in the four sessions of the Preparatory Committee and the various Working Party meetings called by the UNCED Secretariat. Both organizations made contributions to the relevant chapters of Agenda 21.

III. FUTURE PROSPECTS

22. The implementation of Agenda 21 provides a significant opportunity for further cooperation between UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat). In the next few years, both organizations expect to seize the opportunity to address major issues identified in Agenda 21, pertaining to the promotion of sustainable human settlements development. Cooperation will be expanded in the subject areas of relevance to the two organizations and the specific activities indicated by Agenda 21, on the basis of a number of already ongoing programmes.

Annex

PUBLICATIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

People, Settlements, Environment and Development (UNCHS (Habitat), 1991).

Energy for Low-income Settlements (HS/245/91E) (UNCHS (Habitat), 1991).

Improving the Living Environment for a Sustainable Future (HS/270/92E) (UNCHS (Habitat), 1992).

Stormwater Drainage and Land Reclamation for Urban Development (HS/260/91E) (UNCHS (Habitat), 1991).

Climate and Human Settlements: Integrating Climate into Urban Planning and Building Design in Africa (UNEP, 1991).

Surface Water Drainage for Low-income Communities (World Health Organization, 1991).

Indoor Environment: Health Aspects of Air Quality, Thermal Environment, Light and Noise (UNEP, 1991).